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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (previously presented): An apparatus, comprising:

a shaft having a gripping end and a distal end remote from said gripping end; and

a shaper disposed at the distal end, said shaper including:

a scoop, fixed to the distal end of the shaft at an attachment location, including a first cavity for collecting and holding a bolus of a compressible medium, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and

a former including a second cavity cooperating with the first cavity, butted-hingedly coupled to the scoop proximate the attachment location and mating with the scoop, for cooperating with the scoop for molding and compressing the bolus into a generally spherical ball retained within the shaper.

Claim 2 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the compressible medium is snow.

Claim 3 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop and the former include opposing sections of a generally spherical shell.

Claim 4 (original): The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the former includes an open position relative to the scoop and a closed position relative to the scoop, the former molding the bolus in the closed position.

Claim 5 (original): The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position substantially juxtaposes said opposing sections of said shell.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position mates said opposing sections of said shell.

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Claim 7 (original): The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the former is biased to the open position.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the former is operable to the closed position by one-handed manipulation of a proximal end of the shaft.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a latching mechanism, coupled to said former, for inhibiting said former from returning to said open position.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a release, coupled to said latching mechanism and operable from said gripping end, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said former.

Claim 11 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the shaft is arched.

Claim 12 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop is oriented relative to the shaft such that the generally spherical ball is launchable from the scoop by swinging the shaft through an arc.

Claim 13 (canceled):

Claim 14 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 37 wherein ski pole includes a snow basket on the first distal end.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the scoop is part of the snow basket.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the scoop is part of the former.

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Claim 17 (original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said shaft and said scoop are coupled together using a mating system.

Claim 18 (original): The apparatus of claim 17 wherein said mating system includes a threaded member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop and a complementary member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop.

Claims 19-22 (canceled):

Claim 23 (previously presented): An apparatus, comprising:
a shaft;
a scoop, fixed to a distal end of said shaft at an attachment location;
for collecting and holding an object;
a trapper, butted-hingedly coupled to said scoop at said attachment location and mating with said scoop, for retaining said object within the scoop when in a closed position, said trapper biased to an open position wherein said object may be collected and/or released; and
a latching mechanism, coupled to said trapper, for inhibiting said trapper from returning to said open position.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 23 further comprising a release, coupled to said latching mechanism and proximate to a proximal end of said shaft, for remotely disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said trapper.

Claim 25 (previously presented): An apparatus, comprising:
a shaft having a proximal end for gripping by a user during operation and a distal end remote from said proximal end; and
a forming system disposed at said distal end at an attachment location, said forming system including:

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a first forming element, fixed to said shaft at said attachment location, having a first cavity for collecting and shaping a bolus of snow; and a second forming element, butted-moveably coupled to said shaft proximate said attachment location, having a second cavity mating with said first cavity for cooperatively shaping said bolus of snow into a generally spherical ball.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said first forming element includes an open position relative to said second forming element and a closed position relative to said second forming element, said forming system molding said bolus in said closed position.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 26 wherein said closed position substantially juxtaposes said opposing sections of said shell.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 26 wherein said cavities of said forming elements define opposing portions of a three-dimensional generally spherical object and wherein said closed position mates said opposing sections of said object.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the forming system is biased to the open position.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the forming system is operable to the closed position by one-handed manipulation of said proximal end of the shaft.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a latching mechanism, coupled to said forming system, for inhibiting said forming system from returning to said open position.

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Claim 32 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 31 further comprising a release, coupled to said latching mechanism and operable from said proximal end, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said forming system.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the shaft is arched.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the scoop is oriented relative to the shaft such that the generally spherical ball is launchable from the scoop by swinging the shaft through an arc.

Claim 35 (previously presented): A snowball making apparatus, comprising:
a shaft having a gripping end and a distal end remote from said gripping end; and
a shaper, disposed at said distal end, said shaper including a first forming element butted-hingedly coupled to a second forming element for relative pivotal motion between them greater than about ninety degrees, said second forming element fixed to said distal end, said forming elements each including a cavity for collecting and shaping a bolus of snow into a generally spherical shape.

Claim 36 (previously presented): A snowball making apparatus, comprising:
a shaft having a gripping end and a distal end remote from said gripping end; and
a shaper, disposed at said distal end, said shaper including a pair of opposing forming elements attached to said distal end for relative pivotal motion between them, a first one forming element fixed to said distal end and a second one forming element butted-hingedly coupled to said first one forming element to relatively pivot greater than about ninety degrees, said forming elements each including a cavity for

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collecting and shaping a bolus of snow into a generally spherical shape.

Claim 37 (previously presented): An apparatus, comprising:

a shaft having a gripping end and a distal end remote from said gripping end; and

a shaper disposed at the distal end, said shaper including:

a scoop, coupled to the distal end of the shaft at an attachment location, including a first cavity for collecting and holding a bolus of a compressible medium, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and

a former including a second cavity cooperating with the first cavity, coupled to the scoop proximate the attachment location and mating with the scoop, for cooperating with the scoop for molding and compressing the bolus into a generally spherical ball retained within the shaper, wherein the shaft includes a ski pole.